

Jamaicans' Freedom Papers

A year ago — on April 1, 1959 — the taxation and local rating of land values came into force in the Jamaican parishes of St. Catherine and St. Ann. Further parishes will follow suit as soon as they have been valued. Following is the text of a Message by the Chief Minister, Mr. Norman Manley, Q.C. It is published as a leaflet by the People's National Party of which he is president and is dated: Kingston, June 25, 1959.

Dear Fellow Jamaicans,

Tens of thousands of people including ALL Small Farmers have got benefit from the New Taxation in St. Catherine and St. Ann.

MOST of the medium-size farmers have got benefit.

ALL those who have been taxed because of houses or shops built on their land have got benefit — All of them ARE PAYING less taxes.

HERE ARE THE TRUE FACTS:-

In St. Catherine and St. Ann there are 75,000 Taxpayers: 53,000 persons have had their lands valued at £100 or under and will now pay FOUR SHILLINGS per year Taxes ONLY.

11,000 have had their lands valued between £100 and £200 and will be called upon to pay 8s. 2d. per year Taxes ONLY.

These people are up and down the roads waving their new valuation and tax notices. The new name for them is "FREEDOM PAPERS".

About 9,000 other persons have had their land valued at under One Thousand Pounds and are now paying up to £4 0s. 4d. in St. Ann and £7 0s. 7d. in St. Catherine per year. Most of them are paying less than before.

There are only about 2,000 persons out of 75,000 whose properties have been valued at over £1,000. Most of these will pay more taxes. Most of them were paying far less than they ought to have been paying. Now they are paying what they ought to pay.

There are a few hundred Land Owners who are paying more taxes. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE BUSTAMANTE IS FIGHTING FOR.

There are about One Hundred people on the sea coast in St. Ann in the centre of the TOURIST AREA. These people have got caught by Tourist Development Values. But Government will find a way to help them.

I have already told Jamaica that I will help these people by setting up a Relief Board to reduce the Tax in all cases of genuine hardship. I will not allow anyone even if it is only a hundred or so to be hurt.

The Labour Party pick out one or two of these cases and talk a lot about them. But it is really the big land-owners they are fighting for —

What about the little people?

In St. Catherine and St. Ann 72,877 persons out of 75,000 are singing the praises of the P.N.P. Government.

The reverse side of the P.N.P. leaflet reproducing Mr. Manley's Message reads:-

| | OLD TAX £ | NEW TAX £ |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Alfred Coke (Small Farmer) | | |
| Braeton | 5 1 8 | 4 0 |
| Aston Chue Sang (Baker, Wholesale Grocery and Dry Goods Store) | | |
| Spanish Town | 136 13 6 | 25 3 9 |
| Woolworth (Store) Linstead ... | 268 6 8 | 62 15 2 |
| Riversdale Plantation Ltd (Medium Farm) | 180 10 6 | 89 19 10 |
| Alfred Tenn (Shopkeeper) | | |
| Near Linstead | 37 17 6 | 6 11 |
| Samuel Douglas; Williamsfield | 25 5 11 | 6 11 9 |
| Claudius Hall (Farmer) | | |
| Sligo Ville | 2 10 0 | 4 0 |
| H. K. Lloyd; Stanbury Grove (Small farm & home) | 7 12 6 | 7 4 |
| Jamaica Milk Products Condensery | | |
| Bog Walk | 1,198 9 6 | 132 11 9 |
| Lyesight (Home) Walks Road | 2 16 4 | 4 0 |
| B.I.T.U. (Office) Spanish Town | 116 13 8 | 14 11 6 |
| TAKEN FROM ST. ANN | | |
| Ivy Gordon (Residence) | | |
| St. Ann's Bay | 29 5 0 | 7 16 10 |
| BROWN's Wharf, Ltd (Wharf & Buildings) | | |
| St. Ann's Bay | 208 6 8 | 48 2 8 |
| C. C. Phillips (House & Land) | | |
| Priory | 13 6 8 | 2 7 2 |
| Lady P. Bird (Summer Residence) | | |
| Sylvia Lawn | 166 13 4 | 64 8 8 |
| Peggy Young (Home, Shop & Bar) | | |
| White River | 48 10 0 | 19 6 0 |

COMMENT: We regret this clumsy attempt to impede the impartial operation of an intrinsically just measure in the supposed interest of "only a hundred or so" people. Departures from the principle of an equal tax on equal land value have already made the Jamaican legislation needlessly complicated, and to some extent, a "class measure". All valuable land should be taxed at a uniform rate without regard to the condition or circumstances of individual title holders. Where, for philanthropic or political considerations, it is deemed necessary to help people who are "hurt" by land-value taxation, grant aid should be given to enable them to meet their commitments.

Our latest news (February 25) is that the Bill to set up a Land Taxation Relief Board was then before the Jamaican Parliament.